

SONGS OF
A MOTHER



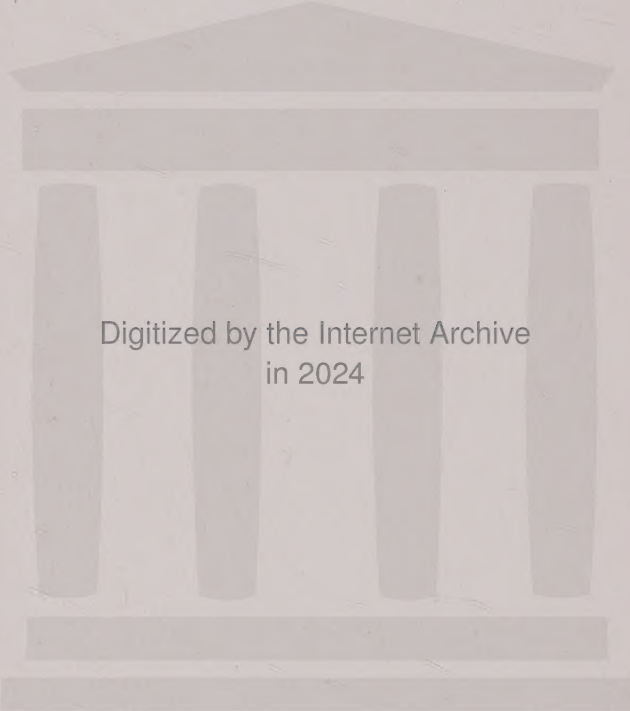
MARIETTA M.
ANDREWS

Jessica R. Smith

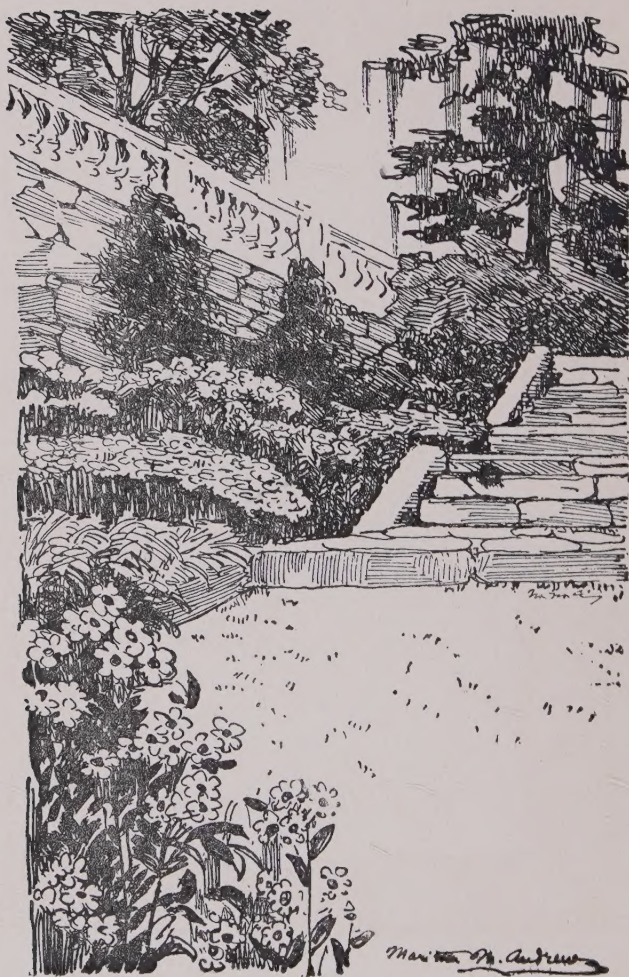
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Songs of a Mother

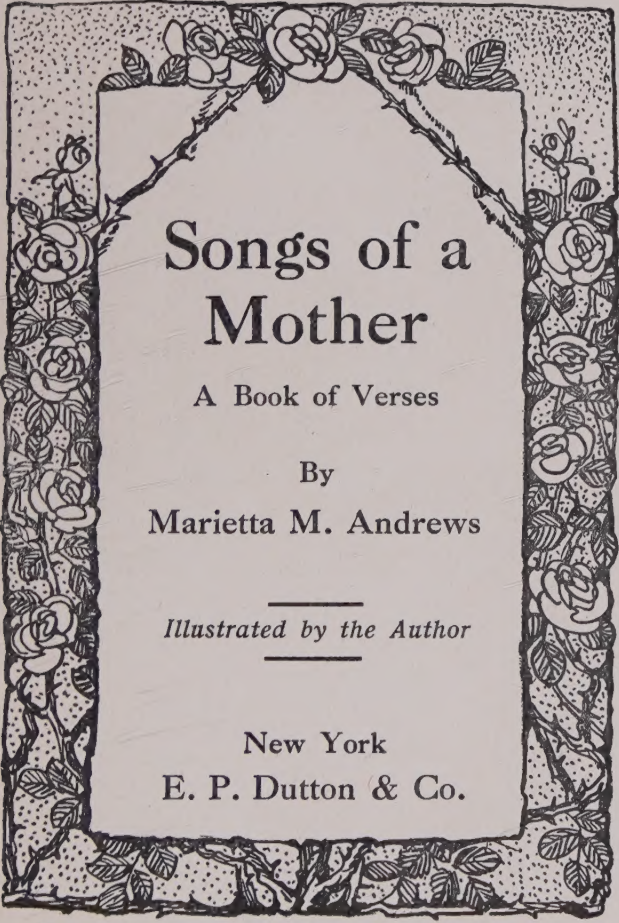


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Marion M. Andrews

Indian Summer



Songs of a Mother

A Book of Verses

By
Marietta M. Andrews

Illustrated by the Author

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To

ELIPHALET FRASER ANDREWS, JR.

In memory of the months we spent together
In solitude and slush and winter weather ;
Our chafing-dish, our study-hours at night,
Our confidential chats by log-fire light ;
In thanks for efforts brave and work well done
I dedicate this book to you, my son.

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Songs of a Mother



GRANDMA THREADS A NEEDLE

Snowy hair and snowy cap,
Snowy muslin in her lap,
 Grandma threads her needle!
Spectacles upon her nose,
On her brow a frown, that shows
 She *will* thread that needle!

Dear old hands are worn and thin,
Eyes are not what eyes have been,
 Grandma threads a needle!
Do not try to help her—no,
She's determined she will show
 Who *can* thread a needle!

EVERYWHERE

Of Him a pale and star-like blossom speaks,
Fringing the regions of eternal ice;
His fingers touch the highest mountain-peaks,
And at our feet—behold! the Edelweiss!

In tropic jungles where the shade is dense
And human hand ne'er tears the vines apart,
Fantastic growths and silences intense,
The red hybiscus opens wide its heart.

In vast unwatered tracts where all seems dead,
The gorgeous cactus blossoms are unfurled;
And lily-like the yucca lifts its head,
In the untrodden deserts of the world.

He clothes the Highland heath with purple bloom,
And sprinkles blue-bells in the English sod;
And spreads o'er all the autumn fields of home
The matchless splendor of the goldenrod.

THE READER AND THE WRITER

Thin hands hold an ancient volume,
Handed down from days gone by,
In whose pages a dead poet
Tells of human tragedy.

Mother reads; her breathless audience
Is one budding woman-thing—
Gingham apron—hair in “pig-tails”—
Note-book—pencil, with pink string!

As she writes with flying fingers,
Ashes of old agonies
Rise to haunt the older woman,
Echoes of dead ecstasies.

All her failures pass before her;
Youth was filled with visions rare,
Lofty Ideal—noble Purpose—
But the years have blown them—where ?

So she reads from the old masters;
Seeks wealth not in things, but Thought;
Seeks to give one future mother
All that she so dearly bought.

What in her of Aspiration
Was but spark, or unblown bud,
In her child may find fulfilment,
Burn in flame, and bloom in Good.



NIGHT THOUGHT

Across the moon, the drowsy soft clouds creep;
My little ones have been an hour asleep;
Between them and their father rolls the deep.
I know his heart with love fills to the brim,
My thoughts do wing their way from home to him
Beyond the far horizon's utmost rim.
—If my weak faith can compass land and sea,
And his thought, homeward bound, return to me,
How all-pervading Love Divine must be!

INDIAN SUMMER

We have wandered in the Tyrol
And in romantic Wales;
We've explored unknown Ontario
And have followed Indian trails;
We have idled on Lake Como
And on beautiful Lucerne,
But when October opens
Our steps must homeward turn.

The grim fiords of Norway,
The fields of Devonshire,
The Trossachs, Naples, Venice,
For ten months of the year—
The whole wide world is ours,
And sweet is every clime,
But take us to Virginia
For the Indian Summer time!

The delicious dews of morning
That bless like nightly rain;
The veil of silvery vapor
Over hill and wood and plain;

And as the dear day ripens
How the sunshine in a flood
Spills glad and golden glory
On the sweet world of the wood!

The stately shining poplars
And the yellow hickories,
The gum-trees, dog-wood, maples,
In crimson harmonies;
Dark steeples of the cedars
Festooned with scarlet vines,
While on high-ways and on by-ways
The blue-eyed aster shines.

And when the air grows chilly
And the lordly sun is low,
The friendly lamps are lighted
And the hick'ry log-fires glow,
And the sausage and the cornbread
Are placed upon the board,
Then the hungry, happy wanderers
Sit them down, and thank the Lord!



MY MOTHER'S PHOTOGRAPH

Her face, a little thin, and no doubt flushing—
A flush the faded photo can't reveal—
(Even when her hair was gray, we've caught her
blushing)
Sweet faithful eyes long lashes half conceal.

Hands all unused to work, fine, dimpled, idle,
Fit but to train her roses on the wall,
Or to caress her pets, or hold her bridle
Or volume of choice verses—that is all!

Her white silk frock, with skirt of ample measure,
Made by her mother's and her sister's hands;
The full tulle veil, the pearls, her dearest treasure,
So, a Virginia bride, my mother stands!

But eighteen years! Unfit for Life's stern duty:
Not knowing how to dress her own rich hair,
Or to take off her little shoes at bed-time,
Dependent on her "Mammy's" constant care.

Used to a mob of friendly, dusky faces,
All sizes, ages—shades of black and brown,—
Used to protection in green, tranquil places,
Plantation-bred, what knows she of the town?

Of narrow rooms, and crowds that rush and hurry,
Of greed and competition, reaching far:
Of “ways and means,” poor child! of work and
worry,
In cities wrecked and ravaged by the War.

.

Oh Mother! Mother! Little blushing blossom!
How soon you learned to do the woman's part!
How pain-racked nerves were soothed upon your
bosom,
How many sons were carried 'neath your heart!

How many words of courage you have spoken,
How many problems solved while others slept.
Seeing so many idols rudely broken,
How many bitter tears those blue eyes wept!

And here, among your dusty old love-letters,
I find this faded picture, stained by time—
With them, unto the friendly flames I give it—
And paint your clearer likeness in my rhyme.



CHILDREN ALONG THE ROAD

One threw an ugly chunk of mud
That struck the wind-shield with a thud,
And shook an angry, grimy fist,
He is a baby anarchist.

Another kissed a dimpled hand
And smiled the smile all understand;
It warms the heart, as on we spin,
That touch, that makes the whole world kin.

All blessings on that curly pate!
How sweet is love! How sad is hate!
And God in Heaven! to him be good—
That baby boy who threw the mud!

Sow in his now unfolding mind
The happy impulse to be kind—
Give him that blessing he has missed—
Dear, rosy, baby anarchist!

DAWN

In the early, early morning
When the summer day is dawning
And the birds begin to cheep,
Then my restless little lovers
Kick away their sheets and covers
As they waken from their sleep.

In their sturdy arms they hold me,
To their baby bosoms fold me,
Lay their cheeks against my cheek;
 With their fists my features pounding—
Sounds of merriment resounding—
While for joy I scarce can speak.

I—an ordinary woman—
Just a stupid, blundering human—
Can such happiness be mine?
Oh! those bruises are entrancing!
And these little feet, just dancing
On my heart seem all divine!

TO BE

To be, and not to seem:
To do, not merely dream:
Daily the pure gold from the false gold sifting;
With eyes turned from the clod
Toward the face of God
A steady course to steer, nor trust to drifting!

To make the Unseen real!
To make things seen ideal!
And from the daily commonplace, be winning
Some lesson high and pure,
Some confidence secure,
This canst thou do, whatever thy beginning!





Marilla M. Andrews

LULLABY

A rich golden glow lingers still in the west,
And every wee bird seeks its own cozy nest:
And Mother's wee birdie, on Mother's own breast
Falls asleep!

But the rich west must fade to a sad, quiet gray,
And the young moon, now rising, must soon fade
away,
And the birdie must rise, at the dawning o' day
And be gone!

And the Mother's warm arms must one day grow
cold,
And the rosy sweet baby, grow thoughtful and
old,
And all of life's fulness, a tale that was told
Long ago!

But thy voice, oh Mother! Thine own tender eyes
And the thought of thine infinite self-sacrifice,
All wealth of example—all dear memories—
Will abide!

THE PROSECUTION

“ Baby, I hear you kicked your nurse;
That’s mighty naughty, and you knew it;
And then, you spit at her—that’s worse—
Did the old Devil make you do it? ”

Promptly, her honest eyes meet mine;
She lisps her answer, without fear;
“ The Debble thinkd I better kick ’er—
The th-spittin’ was-th my own idea.”



MY BOY'S BIRTHDAY

The day my boy was five years old
He left his nurse at early morn
And thro' the hallways, dark and cold,
Crept to the room where he was born;

And climbing in his mother's bed
He wakened her—and laid his cheek
Against her own, and then he said,
In such sweet words as children speak,—

“ Muvver, I've come down here, you know,
To *fank* you that you *borned* me, dear;
I *fought* I'd like to tell you so—
I'm very happy—living here. ”

Then off again he skipped, before
She thanked him for his visit sweet;
And pattering to the nursery door
We heard his little naked feet.

Dear little loving heart! 'tis we
Who bless the day that he was born,
Praying, thro' cloud and sunshine, he
May still be glad—as years roll on!



THE SUNSHINE 'CROSS MY WAY

When all day the sun shines brightly we little heed
its glow;

But when the sky is turning pale and gray,
And the winding road ahead is wrapped in shadows
as we go,

If there falls across the path one golden ray

How it lightens all the darkness, how it brightens
all the gloom,

How it touches every corner dark and drear;
How like a heavenly messenger it really seems to
come

To bring the darkening world a word of cheer!

As we climb some barren road-way, Oh! what a
glad surprise

To find there, in the gravel at our feet,
Some dainty wayside flower, looking straight into
our eyes

'Mid all its mean surroundings pure and sweet.

You are my wayside blossom—my message from
above—

In my dark day, the one pure golden ray;
And at the bitter moment when my poor heart most
needs love

I find in you, the sunshine 'cross my way!

SAVED

Upon the beach there lies to-day
A butterfly with crumpled wing,
Freighted with sand and wet with spray,
 Poor fragile thing!

The glorious clouds float o'er the sea,
The breakers, white with seething foam.
"Poor summer toy! What tempted thee
 So far to roam?"

I spread it gently on my palm:
Open its bruised wings to the sun;
Quivering it lies, secure from harm:
 Lo! it is gone!



SLEEP WITH MOTHER

"Oh Mother! may I sleep with you?" a childish voice said.

"Oh Mother! may I sleep with you, in your own big white bed?

I'm frightened in the nursery—it seems so far away,

And dark, and cold, and lonesome! Say Mother dear, I may!"

Oh Mother! Could I sleep with you, if only for to-night!

Hide my face in your dear bosom, while you told me what is right.

I could own the disappointment: I could throw away the pride

In the darkness, and the stillness, if lying by your side!

I've learned so much of life, Mother, it isn't what it seems;

Death comes to all our ideals, to our fancies and our dreams.

You, you, could give me strength, Mother, to love the thing that's right,

Oh Mother! could I be with you, if only for to-night!

Oh Mother, dear, your latest bed is very dark and deep,

But I would share it with you and your long, untroubled sleep;

I *lost* you, when I went from home: nothing, it seems, can be

The same in all the big wide world, as you have been to me;

I think of my dead childhood—my dead hopes and dead desires;

The spirit was so willing—but the human nature tires.

Now all I ask of God or man is just the simple right

To share your narrow bed, Mother, and sleep with you, to-night.

THE STEPPING-STONE

Only a Stepping-stone, or two, we lie
Conveniently for every passerby:
The bank is treacherous and the flood is deep,
The mountain path ahead is hard and steep!

And some are hurrying ere the day's begun,
And some move sadly toward the setting sun;
And heavy boots, and dainty, on us tread,
For all mankind must cross our river-bed.

And they, whose step is reckless, often slip,
And one, whose eye is on the stars, may trip;
But all, with our humble help, may rise
A little nearer to the glowing skies.

So patiently we wait from day to day,
Filling our place as long years pass away,
Making our lowly sacrifice, unknown,
Such is the fate of every Stepping-stone!

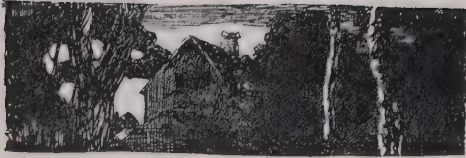


THE MAN

He has argued the case of another,
And his own to-day are fed:
He has built some inches of roadway
For others' feet to tread:
He has daubed a third-rate portrait:
He has hung from a trapeze;
He has roared on the Stock Exchange:
He has chopped down forest trees:
He has kept the books, at a grocery:
Has driven a cab about:
He has hustled food at a dairy lunch:
He has cut an appendix out:
He has followed the plow since morning.

He has danced in a cabaret:
He has grubbed away in a coal mine:
He has taught men how to pray.
In his varied avocations
He has worked for his daily bread,
And a roof for the little circle
Of which he is called the head.

So girls dear, let's go easy
In what we say of the man.
He isn't as clever as we are ^
But—God bless him! he does what he can!
Let's warm and feed and pet him
And see the creature smile!
Let him sit and hold the baby
Beside the fire for a while.
Let's just sit down beside him
And love him all we can;
He isn't as clever as we are,
But—God bless him! He is a man!



ACROSS THE SEA

Across the mystery of the sea
The souls I love commune with me;
Meeting in un-mapped tracts of space,
I seem to find them face to face:
Since Love knows naught of near or far,
Hid in my heart my loved ones are.

Across the mystery of the skies
Our faltering spirits heavenward rise
And reach beyond the remotest star,
Since where God is, His children are.
Oh Father! naught in land or sea
Can touch the spirit hid in Thee!



A WAYSIDE CHAPEL, SWITZERLAND

Oh sweet small sanctuary! when the day
Is done, thy little spire speaks peace,
Calls tenderly to wanderers by the way,
Foretells the time when sin and sorrow cease:
The dear day dies: the summer twilight falls:
Comfort the wounded thing, alone within thy walls!

TO MY BOY

I let you fight the biggest boy;
I let you climb the highest tree;
You had a rifle for a toy,
Tho' it was *agony* for me.

I let you row and swim and dive,
Until you equaled any duck;
I let you ride what horse you would
To test your strength and prove your pluck.

It almost crucified me when
You skated, on the thinnest ice—
You took ten chances out of ten,
And oh! you thought it all so nice!

I bought a Ford, I sat therein,
My feet drawn under me with fear.
Up hill, down dale, how we did spin!
You drove it very well, my dear.

I know it all is for your good,
Yet frozen stiff to-day with fright,
I sat and shivered in the wood
While you cleared stumps with dynamite!

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VISIT TO A CONVENT

Bitterly cold—the place so dreary—
Its chill, impersonal air depresses me—
The all-pervading sense of sacrifice
Jars on my nerves. Joy has a right to be!

Back in the church I sit alone and shiver—
Watching the nuns in solemn double file
Trail in, with candle, cross and breviary,
Under the great arch'd roof, up the long aisle.

Their hollow breasts, their poor heads bowed so
meekly,
Their faces, stereotyped, as marble cold;
Sterile—anæmic—starved—that sable drapery—
God! They are Women—and they're growing
old!

Outside their church, the winter world is throbbing—
Ozone—sunshine—and crisp, hard-frozen snow;
Nerves thrill, blood tingles, lips and cheeks are
ruddy—
The human animal is all aglow—

And far below, down in the squalid village,
Above the anthem, and the organ's tone,
There rises shrill, the blessèd "VOX HUMANA"—
Laughter and cries from children like my own,

Rumbling of wheels and hallooing of drivers—
How pleasantly this discord strikes my ears—
Then—glancing upward to the prisoned choir—
I fall upon my knees in grateful tears!

ELSA

When Elsa plays the violin
The dimples in her cheek and chin
Peep in and out,
Her subtle smile
Follow'ng the music all the while;
I follow it, and courage win,
When Elsa plays the violin.

When Elsa plays the violin
Her little hands seem white and thin;
Her profile, 'gainst the mellow tone
Of rich old wood, is sweetly shown;
Her pensive face, in calm content,
Lovingly to her task is bent;
I see new heaven and earth begin,
When Elsa plays the violin.

When Elsa plays the violin
I drift away from home and kin;
My heart grows light,

My soul expands,
Floating in far-off fairy-lands;
I slip away from care and sin
When Elsa plays the violin.



MORITURI

We who are growing older,
Knowing ourselves immune,
Love women and men and children,
And find the world in tune;

Moríturi!

Find all things beat in tune.

For Life, itself, has rounded
Into a thing complete,
And we feel the lure of the ending
In the glare of a mid-night street,
—Or the dark of a rainy street.

Fearless and sympathetic
Treading ways that are strange and far,
Rubbing elbows with our fellows
Through crowds where the lost ones are,
—Or the ultra-righteous are!

Will chance the knife, the ether,
For the longest is not long;
And yield to the anæsthetic
As a babe to a mother's song;
—To a low-toned, dreamy song.

Will stake our all on a venture,
 With perhaps one chance in ten;
 For what is money, but servant
 To the growing souls of men ?
 —To the making and training of men ?

We have touched so many sorrows,
 Traversed so many lands,
 Found selfish joys but shadows
 Eluding our eager hands
 —Till we give, with both our hands.

So much is to us forgiven,
 Now we hasten to forgive;
 In life's quiet twilight hour
 The harsh grudge cannot live,
 —Nothing but love, can live.

Thoughtful, tolerant, tender,
 For us no fear exists,
 And the young world rushes by us,
 As we turn to face the mists.
 —The cold wide River, the mists !

We step into the waters,
 Ready, serene, alone,
 And your world loses sight of us
 And the Unknown is the Known—

Moríturi !

And we know as we are known.

TO ONE OF MY OWN AGE

You seem so young, yet we were girls together.

How have you held old Father Time at bay?

All jauntiness and style, I wonder whether

His icy touch has never come your way?

No scar, at least, is on you, of his passing;

Lithe is your figure and your step is light;

(Is your heart light?) Your costumes are bewitch-
ing—

Men say you dance divinely thro' the night—

Your crown of white hair makes you more attrac-
tive—

A foil, only, to your flower-like face!

The débutantes hang shyly in the corners,

Envy your wealth, your savoir-faire and grace!

(Do you forget that money—your young earnings?

How far you stretched it, and the good it did?

Has any other money seemed so mighty,

Such magic worked, so helped and comforted?)

It cannot be that you have missed the riches

That women of our age so ill can spare,

Those tender memories! I think the dancing,

The men, the trivial talk, the noise and glare

Are, somehow, not in keeping. Do old sorrows
Never, within your heart of hearts, awake?
Old loves and griefs that haunt, but keep you holy,
Calm and inviolate, for old sake's sake?
That hold you tolerant and sweet and friendly,
But lend a little touch of gravity?
Encompass you with just enough of sadness,
A subtle trace of—dignity—maybe?

.

And, looking at you, dear, I can but ponder
That all the years so lightly o'er you roll;
And fear takes hold upon me, and I tremble,
Wondering, where have you buried your sweet
soul?



MAMMY

The years slip by; the old world's face and ways
Are changing ever, all inconstancy;
Yet from our childhood's far and hazy days
Remains one dear, unchanging memory—

Mammy!

A broad and kindly face, 'neath its gay crown
Of the bandanna, chequered gold and red,
A so expansive smile, on cheeks so brown,
And bosom soft and ample, where a head
Of tangled, sunny curls loved well to rest—
Where one might hear the steady, faithful beat
Of one old negro's heart—for Mammy's breast
Was in all childish woes, the first retreat—

Mammy, Dear Mammy!

The slave-child was not taught to read or write,
But Mammy had her own philosophy—
“Ole Mistis” taught her early “what wuz right”
And that, she hammered into you and me!
Told us rare stories in the fire-light,
The superstitions of her childish race;
She kissed the poor bumped head and made it
right,

And laughed away the tears from baby-face—
She crooned the sweetest old revival hymns—
Echoes of many a weird and ancient lay—
When, tired out, and full of childish whims,
We scrambled to her lap at close of day—
Mammy! Dear Mammy.

TO MY DAUGHTER

(On her Ninth Birthday)

What though the sweet white rose I plant to-day
May never bloom for me ?

What though I never rest beneath the shade
Of this young tree ?

This rose's breath may sweeten some waste place
In days to come, maybe :

Some weary brother pause and rest a space
Beneath my tree !

Let me but plant one rose along Life's way,
Nourish one noble tree,—

Faithfully cherish loveliness to-day
Still in its infancy.

Give to the race in my dear daughter's eyes
The light of purity,

Give in my boy, a soul that wills and tries,
Force and integrity.

Let me not hope and pray alone for mine,
Those of my name and blood,

But for the coming of that reign divine
When even the least is good.

Let me not ask that to my own be given
The choicest daily bread,
But rather, train my own to work for Heaven,
'Til all Christ's lambs be fed!



MY VOLUNTEER

And can it be, you are eighteen ?
Are eighteen years so quickly flown ?
It seems I feel your tiny heart
Throb steadily beneath my own !

And can it be, you are eighteen ?
I think I see my baby still,
Straining to reach the o'er-full breast,
With rose-bud mouth to drink his fill.

And can it be, you are eighteen ?
Need I not guide you as you walk ?
Nor hold your little dimpled hand ?
Nor stoop, to hear your baby-talk ?

Again, I feel you, 'gainst my knee
With sister, by the open fire ;
We tell old tales of chivalry ;
Our people never fought for—hire !

With Cœur-de-Lion, Charlemagne,
Our forebears bled for what seemed right ;
Knighted, on hard-won battle-fields,
They neither shirked nor feared a fight.

Now, with the others, you would go ?
And be a man, and bear a gun ?
The fire of those old chevaliers
Burns bright in you—my son—my son !

THE CHRYSALIS

No sound, no motion, in this dry cocoon;
No flutter of wet wings to spread so soon
And leave their prison house, and mounting high
To bear a radiant life toward the sun and sky.

I wonder if this tiny thing can dread
Its transformation? Or can thrill instead
With sweet expectancy? Or realize
Aught of the larger life of summer fields and skies?

There was a time when, all unconscious, I,
Cradled beneath my mother's heart did lie.
Nourished, protected, loved, I nothing knew
Of the vast outer world, as day by day I grew.

And yet methinks an instinct, vague and small,
Stirred me to restlessness: "This is not all,"
Was whispered through the darkness. "Sun-
shine strange
Awaits thee, light, air, sound, and a stupendous
change."

To-day, in body grown, part conscious, I,
One of the many, strive beneath the sky.
I breathe the air: I feel the sun and rain;
Have knowledge too of love, of joy, of pain.

But times my timid spirit apprehends
A summons from a distance and she lends
For that far call, an all-attentive ear;
“Come! for a more abundant life awaits you here!

“At thy first birth, thy Maker gave thee breath.
Thy second birth-pangs men have written ‘Death.’
More light! More light! each but sets wide a
gate
Leading thee further to a nobler fate.”

MATERNITY AND WAR

Him did I nourish with my life and strength:
Him did I feed—oh, God! how tenderly:
Him I delivered to my love at length,
Placing a baby son on a good father's knee.

Proudly, how proudly, he looked in this sweet face,
Seeing himself, and something, too, of me:
Seeing the hope and promise of his race,
Knowing I would have died, that this new life
might be.

And so it is, a man was made,
To lay his well-belovèd head
Upon the blood-soaked sod,
To die, before the fight was won:
To die, and leave his work undone:
To die, forsaken and alone,
Save for his mother and his God.

THE OLD BROWN LEAF

The Generations of Men are as the Generations of
Leaves.— HOMER.

The old brown leaf, like a father's hand,
Holds on to the twig with its crotch,
While nestled secure, protected, sure,
The bud hides away in its notch.
Slow that young growth, while the days are cold,
And through the blustering weather,
So the young and the old, Thank God! may hold
Still a little while together!

Let the March wind blow by day, by night,
And tug with a right good will;
The leaf holds tight with all its might,
And shelters its darling still!
Skyward and sunward, the bud is thrust,
Slow loosening that grip each day,—
(For grow it must!) Then a sudden gust
Tears the old brown leaf away—

Joyous, forgetful, bursts the Spring—
Woods ring with amorous strife—
The world awakes—the forest shakes—
The still earth teems with life—
The pollen-dust blows everywhere—
The flower and leaf unfold—
Its place is filled—A world's to build—
The staunch old leaf is mould!



Miss M. Andrews

AN OLD HOMESTEAD

I remember an old homestead in a village
In Virginia, many, many years ago;
'Twas built of wood and fashioned very plainly;
Its roof was large, its ceilings quaintly low;
It straggled back towards a generous kitchen,
Presided over by a dusky queen;
And just outside there was an old brick dairy,
Its dull red walls all splotched with mosses
green.

The sweep of emerald lawn, the ancient hedges
Are clear before my vision here to-night;
Row after row of dear old-fashioned roses,
And then—the kitchen garden, out of sight!
And back of that, the stable: two old scrrels;
A harness, pieced with shoe-strings here and
there;
A roomy, rickety old family carriage
That carried everybody everywhere.

Stately and kindly, here one woman's presence
Shed sweetest grace on every common thing;
Mothering her own and everybody's children;
Dear and unwearied in her ministering.
Her children's friends poured out their troubles to
her;
The casual guest was welcomed, warmed, and
fed
Upon the best cured ham, the whitest celery,
The stiffest jelly and the lightest bread.

From one great roll of old-time "linsey-woolsey"
She made for her small daughters all their
frocks—
And by the firelight, her swift knitting needles
Clicked cheerily o'er endless mits and socks.
Some told their sorrows, in that quiet hour;
Some opened to her sympathetic mind
The evil they had done—their wretched blunders—
And her sound sense a remedy would find.

.

And she grew old—and died. The house? "Re-
modeled."

The telephone is ringing night and day.
The gramophone grinds out new-fangled music—
Not the old airs she heard her daughters play.

Her dear old roses, too, are gone—the garden,
Rigid and ordered as a graveyard seems,
—Too clean, too up-to-date, too neat, too prosperous!
Its sweet disorder lives but in my dreams.

The home-made stockings and the linsey-woolsey
The rising generations will not know;
Motors replace the ancient family carriage;
Steam heat, the great log-fire's friendly glow.
No more we live beneath the limitations
That made the older life seem cramped and
small.
And yet—oh Mother! It was your high spirit
That gave such fine distinction to it all!



THE THINGS WE GET FOR NOTHING

Many have dared to say it,
But who, I ask, can prove
That " the things we get for nothing "
Are the things we fail to love ?

Friendships, that come unbidden,
And love, that comes unsought,
And the patient Christ in Heaven,
Whom we have sold—not bought.

And those gleams of generous spirit
In the sordid souls and mean;
Those little god-like touches,
That make the unclean clean.

And unexpected beauty
In the most unlikely place,
As in tangled, rank fence corners,
The stately " Queen Anne's lace. "

As we stumble, with our sorrows,
Through a dull world, that forgets,
In the solitudes we seek for,
Have we found no—violets ?

70 **The Things We Get for Nothing**

Blooming there in sweet profusion,
 'Round some fatherly old tree—
Oh! Where's God's child, who loves not
 The gifts God gives him free?



A SWORD ALSO^{*}

Humanity is fainting,
Sin and Death are painting
Shadows o'er our life;
But the love maternal
Shines a light supernal,
O'er the bitter strife.

A halo still adorns
The Mother's brow, though thorns
Be on it pressed;
Through shameful deed and word,
Though in her heart a sword,
She blesses, and is blessed.

^{*} Translated from the German.

DETACHMENT

As imperceptibly
The sweet years vanish,
And of them only hazy memories stay,
From our own hands
The things that most we cherished
Fall silently and painlessly away.
As day by day
Our vision, more far-reaching,
Has glimpses of imperishable things.
We feel Life's roots
Are loosening in the soil
Of earth—
We feel the straining of heart-strings.
And eyes,
From human ties and dear affections
Are lifted to the everlasting hills.
And Things
Are seen at last
In truer values,
As the slow soul its destiny fulfils.

Oh! Have we bound the young world
That succeeds us
To Faith and Duty,
With Love's golden bands—
Oh! Do we leave it generous and honest,
Dare we let go,
And fold our worn hands?
To it
May we, in confidence, turn over
A world that cost us blood
And prayers
And tears;
And will it build,
Upon our firm foundations,
A wider brotherhood for coming years?
Across the torn foreground
Of this Present,
Undaunted by the tragic ages past,
Can our struggling sons
Build up a kingdom
For God?
And shall Right sit enthroned
At last?

We have not
Bound the dear young world
That follows
Hard on our footsteps, in Love's mighty chain;

Nor could we give it scope,
And breadth of vision,
Knowing how few foundations firm remain.
Knowing,
With knowledge dearly bought,
That brothers
Stranger become than strangers,
When their Faith
Throws Will on Will,
In cruelest confusion—
And opens questions never solved by Death.
Moved by old enmities
And new conditions,
Mingles young blood with blood
In reeking trench,
As History's bewildering transitions
Tear heart from heart,
In agonizing wrench.

Blind with the rage,
The tumult,
Of this Present,
How shall our sons look steadfastly
For Light ?
How shall God's throne arise
From out this wreckage ?
And " What is Truth ? "
Who shall define " The Right ? "

God! In Thy lovely country of to-morrow
May a fair future open to the race!
May men and nations master each old sorrow
Till littleness and envy find no place!
Then, shall Thy brave, clean winds to shreds have
torn
The gray and tangled cobwebs of the brain;
Then, shall Thy just sun have burned out the worn
Grudges that fill the world's great heart with
pain.
Then shall the Vision,
Now but ours in glimpses,
Because our world is swamped
In wastes of blood,
Be vouchsafed our struggling sons
More clearly,
That where we failed, our children
May make good!

THE TREE AND THE CLOUD

(THE TREE TO THE CLOUD)

" Oh cloud! I stretch out longing arms to thee,
So light, so bright, so infinitely free,
While I, forever, rooted fast must be!

An hour ago, thou wast not: now on high
Perfect, untrammeled, sail'st thou the sky;
Thro' years of painful growth, still incomplete am
I!"

(THE CLOUD TO THE TREE)

" Oh noble tree! we live but as is meant;
I float above, only as I am sent;
Thou, rooted fast, standest by wise intent:

An hour ago, indeed, I was not born:
When the sun sets to-night I shall be gone.
Firm thou shalt stand, while myriad clouds pass
on.

I die, a fleeting thing, as die I must;
An hundred years may lay thee in the dust,
Yet know, strong tree, the One above is just!

Be still and grow! His purposes are plain.
I thank Him my brief life is not in vain,
Since I have spoken for Him, and may not speak
again!"



L'ENVOI

'Speeding your little ambulance
Along the ruined roads of France,
You will be far from home, my dear,
Before these verses shall appear—
Taking your chances, as one man—
Doing as much as one man can.

I see your firm hands grip the wheel,
Whatever pain your heart may feel,
While raging against cruelty,
Still tender of the agony,
And bearing safe each broken life
To sheltering roof and saving knife.

Those sweet brown eyes, that yet have seen
Only the courteous and clean,
Shall open wide with shame and grief,
As eagerly you bring relief,
You, and your little ambulance,
To other boys in tortured France.

Long have I prayed that I might see
One fearless man, spontaneously
Doing the right, nor counting cost—
Acting—though he himself be lost—
God, in God's time, has shown me one—
God's servant—but my little son.



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